

Message Text

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ACTION ITFE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3276

INFO USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMCONSUL KARACHI

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS : OGEN, PFOR UNDP, CB, PK, TC

SUBJECT : CAMBODIAN REFUGEE'S REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE

REF: KARACHI 1830

1. EMBASSY MOST INTERESTED BY REFTEL IN THAT WE TOO HAD CONTACT WITH SAR SOK IN ABU DHABI AND STORY HE TOLD US SOMEWHAT AT VARIANCE THAT WHICH HE GAVE CONGEN KARACHI. FOR BENEFIT THOSE TRYING TO SORT OUT SITUATION, FOLLOWING IS ACCOUNT FOR SAR SOK'S EXPERIENCE IN UAE.

2. SAR SOK SHOWED UP AT EMBASSY IN ABU DHABI ON THURSDAY NIGHT AUGUST 7. DUTY OFFICER COMING IN TO MAKE POUCH EXCHANGE STUMBLED INTO SITUATION. AFTER SOME DISCUSSION IT WAS AGREED TO LET SAR SOK SPEND NIGHT OUTSIDE EMBASSY PREMISES IN COMPANY WITH LOCAL POLICE GUARD, WITH EFFORT TO BE MADE FOLLOWING MORNING FURTHER TO CLARIFY SITUATION. STORY SAR SOK TOLD US NEXT DAY WAS FOLLOWS: HE HAD BEEN WORKING IN INDONESIA FOR SUBSIDIARY FIRM OF ROBIN DREDGING (HEAD OFFICES IN SINGAPORE). JOB THERE HAD APPARENTLY ENDED AND ROBIN PROPOSED SEND HIM TO DUBAI IN UAE (HE HAD LETTER THIS EFFECT) WHERE THEY HAVE CONTRACT TO DREDGE CREEK. SAR SOK STATED HE SOUGHT ENTER SINGAPORE ON WAY TO DUBAI BOTH TO CLARIFY NATURE OF JOB HE WOULD HAVE AND TO TALK TO ROBIN HEAD OFFICE ABOUT SALARY THEY HOLDING FOR HIM (REPORTEDLY 2,200 SINGAPORE DOLLARS).

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SINGAPORE AUTHORITIES WOULD NOT LET HIM ENTER WITHOUT COMPANY

SPONSORSHIP AND ROBIN FOR ITS PART REPORTEDLY TOLD HIM DURING TELEPHONE CONVERSATION FROM AIRPORT THAT HE SHOULD JUST GO ON TO DUBAI WHERE CONTRACT WOULD BE ARRANGED FOR MORE MONEY THAN HE HAD BEEN EARNING IN INDONESIA. SAR SOK THEREFORE PROCEEDED TO DUBAI ON COMPANY-PAID TICKET AND ENTERED AUGUST 6 ON 96-HOUR VISA. ROBIN DREDGING IN DUBAI, HOWEVER, WANTED HIM SIGN TWO-YEAR CONTRACT AT LESS MONEY THEN HE HAD BEEN PROMISED BY PHONE IN SINGAPORE. UNWILLING MAKE SUCH COMMITMENT--AND NOT LIKING HOT HUMID WEATHER HE FOUND IN DUBAI--SAR SOK REFUSED SIGN AND DECIDED SEEK HELP FROM U.S. EMBASSY. HAVING NO MONEY, HE HITCHED RIDE TO ABU DHABI AND APPEARED ON OUR DOORSTEP.

3. ON BASIS OF SAR SOK'S STORY, OUR REACTION WAS MUCH SAME AS CONGEN KARACHI--I.E. HE WAS NOT TECHNICALLY REFUGEE, PARTICULARLY IN THAT HE HAD WHAT APPARENTLY WAS FIRM JOB OFFER, EVEN IF IT MIGHT NOT BE IDEAL. AGAIN LIKE CONGEN KARACHI, ONLY COURSE WE COULD SEE WAS TO REFER SAR SOK TO U.N., IN OUR CASE TO UNICEF WHICH HAS OFFICE IN ABU DHABI. HOWEVER, WITH FRIDAY OFF HERE, THIS WOULD HAVE TO WAIT UNTIL SATURDAY. BUT AT THIS POINT LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN FORM OF POLICE TOOK HAND. BEING AWARE OF SITUATION THROUGH THEIR SECURITY GUARD AT EMBASSY, THEY APPEARED FRIDAY AM AND STATED THEY WISHED TO CHECK SAR SOK'S STATUS--HAD HE ENTERED COUNTRY AS HE SAID? WAS HE HERE LEGALLY? ETC. SAR SOK WAS AGREEABLE AND WE CLEARLY HAD NO BASIS FOR OBJECTION, PARTICULARLY IN THAT POLICE PROMISED KEEP US INFORMED OF RESULTS THEIR INVESTIGATION. NEXT DAY POLICE INFORMED US THAT SAR SOK WAS LEGALLY IN COUNTRY, THAT THEY HAD NO COMPLAINT AGAINST HIM, BUT THAT IN THEIR VIEW HE WAS NOT REFUGEE. RATHER, THEY STATED THEY WOULD ASSIST HIM TO LEAVE COUNTRY--WHICH WAS HIS WISH--AND THAT THEY WOULD CONTACT ROBIN DREDGING IN DUBAI IN EFFORT SORT OUT HIS AFFAIRS WITH THAT FIRM. ON BASIS OUR LAST CONTACT AUGUST 14 WITH SAR SOK (THEN BACK IN DUBAI) AND POLICE OFFICIALS, IT WAS OUR IMPRESSION THAT POLICE STILL IN POSTURE OF SEEKING ASSIST HIM AND THAT HE WOULD BE LEAVING FOR SINGAPORE WITHIN NEXT FEW DAYS. IN THIS CONNECTION, SAR SOK TOLD US ON MORE THAN ONE OCCASION THAT HE DID NOT RPT NOT WISH RETURN TO PHNOM PENH AND POLICE TOLD US THEY HAD NO INTENTION OF SENDING HIM THERE.

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4. COMMENT: ON BASIS OF STORY AS HE GAVE IT TO US, RATHER THAN BEING REFUGEE, IT APPEARED THAT SAR SOK (A) WAS BEING TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF BY FIRM OF ROBIN DREDGING WHICH KNEW FULL WELL LIMITED OPTION OPEN TO HIM, AND (B) HAD BEEN MORE THAN BIT FOOLISH TO EVER LEAVE SINGAPORE FOR DUBAI IN FIRST PLACE. WHILE THIS GAVE GROUNDS FOR CERTAIN SYMPATHY FOR HIM, THERE WAS OBVIOUSLY LIMITED AMOUNT WE

COULD DO, PARTICULARLY WHEN LOCAL AUTHORITIES INVOLVED
THEMSELVES IN WHAT WAS MATTER QUITE PROPERLY OF THEIR
CONCERN AS WELL. AS FOR DISCREPANCIES BETWEEN ABOVE STORY
AND THAT GIVEN TO CONGEN KARACHI--MUCH LESS SAR SOK'S
APPARENT FAILURE IN KARACHI TO EVEN MENTION HIS CONTACTS WITH U.S.
EMBASSY ABU DHABI--WE HAVE NO EXPLANATION. JUST FROM
STANDPOINT OUR OWN CURIOSITY, WE WOULD BE INTERESTED IN ANY
FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS THIS AFFAIR.
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